

## **GM Artist Hub awarded £60,000 by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support independent artists in Greater Manchester**

A project spearheaded by thirteen leading performing arts organisations across Greater Manchester has been awarded £60,000 by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support independent artists and creative freelancers in the area.

GM Artist Hub was formed in April 2020 to help independent artists access support, advice and opportunities during the COVID-19 crisis. The project has now offered nearly 300 private advice sessions to local artists and a number of larger opportunities for artists to learn about specific funding streams and connect with chief executives and artistic directors across the city region.

Participating venues and arts organisations are: Community Arts North West, Contact, HOME, The Lowry, Manchester International Festival, Octagon Theatre Bolton, Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Royal Exchange Theatre, SICK! Festival, STUN (Sustained Theatre Up North), Waterside Arts and Creative Industries Trafford, hÅb/Word of Warning and Z-arts.

This funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will allow the project to offer a range of new opportunities to local artists including creative care and wellbeing support, opportunities to develop new skills and co-commissions offered across a range of local partners.

**Claire Symonds, Senior Producer: Artist Development at The Lowry, says:** *“Through GM Artist Hub, we wanted to demonstrate our collective support for the passionate and vibrant freelance community that sits at the heart of Greater Manchester’s creative scene. Artists are the lifeblood of our industry. What’s more, their creativity and ability to adapt will be absolutely critical as we all look for new ways of reaching out to audiences while social distancing is in place.*

*“Over the last six months we have been listening to artists as they make sense of things and begin to work out what their new needs and priorities are. This award from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation means we can start offering opportunities that are relevant to our local community right now.”*

Details about the new programmes on offer will be announced in mid-September. For more information about GM Artist Hub, visit [www.gm-artisthub.co.uk](http://www.gm-artisthub.co.uk)